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*Tour:*

### Costa Rica Adventure

*Specialisation:*

Biology, Ecology, Earth Science, Animal Science,  
 Agriculture, Geography & Culture

*Itinerary:*

8-days / 7-nights

*Preferred Dates:*

January through November; excluding Easter Week

Costa Rica STEM Adventure - Sample Itinerary					
Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening		
1	Travel to Costa Rica; transfer to Hotel; Welcome & Safety Meeting; Boxed Meal				
2	Breakfast	Poas Volcano National Park	Doka Estate Coffee Plantation Tour	Dinner	
3	Breakfast	Lowland Rain Forest Exploration - Ziplining Expedition & Whitewater Rafting on the Sarapiquí		Dinner	Bat Master Class
4	Breakfast	Chocolate Workshop	Transfer to Fortuna	Arenal Volcano Hike	Dinner
5	Breakfast	Eco-Centre Danaus	The Cultour - Costa Rica Culture	Baldi Hot Springs	Dinner
6	Breakfast	Transfer to Pacific	Santa Lucia Town	Jungle Crocodile Safari Cruise	Dinner
7	Breakfast	Manuel Antonio National Park; free time at Beach			Dinner
8	Breakfast	Transfer to San Jose Airport; Fly Home			



“Mention Costa Rica and people think paradise. The country's Disney-like cast of creatures — ranging from howler monkeys to toucans — are prolific and relatively easy to spot. The waves are prime, the beauty is staggering and the sluggish pace seductive. Costa Rica, despite being such a tiny nation, draws well over a million visitors every year - and you can see why. The incredibly varied topography means you can cruise a cloud forest one day, climb a volcano the next, and finish passed out on a hot sandy beach.” - **Lonely Planet**

## Specialists in STEM Student Travel

As with all sample itineraries, please be aware that this is an “example” of a schedule and that the activities and hotels shown may be variable dependent upon dates, weather, special requests and other factors. Itineraries will be confirmed prior to travel.



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 Registered office as above. VAT No. 784 3347 05

# Costa Rica is one of the most biologically diverse regions on the planet!

General Information: [www.visitcostarica.com](http://www.visitcostarica.com)

## Day 1

### *Boxed Meal*

Travel to Costa Rica via air, arriving at Juan Santamaría International Airport. After boarding your transportation, your group will be swiftly transferred to your hotel. Dependent upon arrival time, your group will reconvene for a boxed dinner later in the evening, or if a late arrival, head for bed!



**SAMPLE Hotel – Quality Inn San Jose** - The Quality Hotel Real San Jose is conveniently located in Santa Ana, Costa Rica. Enjoy the facilities of the hotel or take a walk into biggest commercial zone in San José. Hotel amenities include television LCD/plasma screens, air conditioning, free Wi-Fi in all rooms, 24-hour front desk, wake-up services, recreational facilities including fitness center, golf course (within 3 km), outdoor pool and garden, restaurant, bar and room service, plus safety deposit boxes. [www.camdyinnsuites.com/id-492940.html](http://www.camdyinnsuites.com/id-492940.html)

## Day 2

### *Breakfast-Lunch-Dinner*

Rise and shine Costa Rica!! After a great breakfast, we'll start off our tour with a fantastic day. We'll board our transportation and head to Poás Volcano and then the Doka Estate!

**Poás Volcano** - Poás volcano is a powerful symbol of the geothermal forces that formed Costa Rica. When the mist and clouds part you'll see the sulphuric, bubbling, green rain-fed lake at the bottom, surrounded by smoke and steam rising from fumaroles. Water from the lake is constantly seeping through cracks in the hot rock, evaporating and building pockets of steam. When the pressure in these pockets exceeds the weight of the water above, the steam breaks through in geysers that rocket up to 820 feet (250 meters) high. Don't worry about getting a shower though, the crater is 1,050 feet (320 meters) deep. At almost a mile across it's also the largest active crater in the world.



A modern visitors' centre and small museum explains and interprets the geothermal and ecological attractions in the park. Poás is active, but don't expect to see a full-fledged eruption or even any lava flow here. The most recent period of eruptive activity ended in 1954 and the last major activity was in 1910 when nearly a million tons of ash was ejected along with an immense column of smoke and steam.

The volcano provides an excellent if extreme example of the effects of acid rain. Around the caldera, and for several miles downwind, the vegetation is stunted brown and black by the tainted moisture that precipitates from the omnipresent clouds near the peak.



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After our morning at Poás, we're off to one of our favorite locations – The Doka Estate.

**The Doka Estate Coffee Tour** - Located in the coffee capital of Costa Rica, Sabanilla, Alajuela, this coffee plantation belongs to the Costa Rican Vargas Ruiz family; pioneers of coffee production for more than 70 years. In 2000 and 2001, the Doka Estate was awarded as the best Estate Coffee of Costa Rica for two consecutive years by the Asociación Semana Internacional del Café (SINTERCAFE). [www.dokaestate.com](http://www.dokaestate.com)



The main objective of the Coffee Tour is to educate students on the agriculture and production process of coffee. The tour takes place on the Doka Estate, where students learn about production, harvesting, the processing plant and the roasting of the coffee grain. Costa Rica has a large variety of microclimates and altitudes within short distances. The route taken explains how the different climatic factors flavor the taste of the coffee. Guided by an expert, students will receive extensive information making this activity an incomparable experience.

- The tour begins in the seedbed. Students will observe and learn the development process of the plant up to the point of recollection of the ripe grain. Students also learn about the history of the estate, its owners, the production and varieties of plants, the geography of the area and the traditional ways of cultivating the grain.
- The second station is the oldest humid coffee processing plant, declared to be an Architectural Heritage for Humanity in 2003, that works by hydraulic power. In the receiver, students will see and learn about the first classification of the grains, and afterwards, the process of de-pulping of first and second quality coffee that takes place in the grinders.
- Next, the natural honey of the grain is cut in the fermentation tanks and a process is carried out that is significant to the taste of the coffee. The coffee that has been dried in the Guardiola or on the patios under the sun, is stored in the warehouse. This grain is ready to be peeled, and then exported or roasted in the country.
- Finally, the roasting plant 'Café Tres Generaciones' is visited, where students will observe the different types of roasts that are offered.



And, best yet, we'll 'taste' the process along the way!

After a tremendous day, we'll head back to our hotel for dinner and a well-deserved night of rest.

### **Day 3**

*Breakfast-Lunch-Dinner*

Good morning Sam Jose! After breakfast at the hotel, we'll transfer to the Sarapiquí area, approximately 2-hours, for a day full of adrenaline and outdoor exploration at Hacienda Pozo Azul!



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**Hacienda Pozo Azul** is a 2,000-acre ranch in Sarapiquí, located approximately a 2-hour transfer from San Jose. The Hacienda's many trails have plenty of natural fauna, beautiful rivers and waterfalls, giving our guests the opportunity to explore on horseback, mountain bikes, or in a guided nature walk, or just enjoy bird watching as they drift down the Sarapiquí River. Adventurous travellers will feel their adrenaline rise as they discover the wonders of Hacienda Pozo Azul with a thrilling (and safe) Treetop Canopy Ride ending with a spectacular 900-foot zip line across the Sarapiquí River. Or, sample the exhilaration of white water rafting with the Sarapiquí's year-round, class II and III rapids, all with top quality equipment and experienced certified guides. For even more 'hands-on' excitement, rappel down the Sarapiquí River canyon with special safety ropes. Hacienda Pozo Azul guides are not only certified in Health & Safety procedures, but also specialise in each of the activities they perform at the hacienda. [www.pozoazul.com/tours](http://www.pozoazul.com/tours)

**NOTE:** Groups may choose one of the following activities for this morning's activity and then a second activity for the afternoon. Options include horseback riding, canopy/ziplining, rafting (Class II – III) or rappelling. Each person will have the opportunity to pick two independent activities. **Those electing to participate in whitewater rafting should be capable of swimming. A waiver/release is required for all activities and for all participants.**

After our thrilling day, we'll "camp" for an outstanding forested evening!

**Sample Accommodation - Hacienda Pozo Azul Tent Suites** - Imagine sleeping to the harmonious lullaby of the jungle's night rounds, waking up to the Congo's greeting and the bird's song in an ambiance of comfort, privacy and immersed in nature. This is what you will live at Hacienda Pozo Azul Tent suites! Hacienda Pozo Azul Tent Suites is not a 5- star Hotel, it's more than that! It is a magical experience that combines nature with comfort, the rugged with the modern, relaxation with excitement.



Here you will be able to let nature and its forest absorb you while sleeping a canvas away from 4% of the world biodiversity. Your main door will be zipped and your windows will be screens; your enjoyment will be complete. The Hacienda Pozo Azul has 30 Tent Suites equipped with 2 queen size beds or 1 king size bed, comfortable bathrooms with hot water and a furnished private deck; telephone and Wi-fi in all suites and fans both in the rooms and on the decks. Additional amenities include full reception, dining area, in-room satellite television, reading room, computer access available, convenience store and a social area for meetings.

[www.pozoazul.com/rooms](http://www.pozoazul.com/rooms)

After dinner, it's time for a little flying exploration!

**Night Bat Workshop** - Bats represent 50% (110 species) of Costa Rican mammals. Students will enhance their education, dispel myths they may have heard about these wonderful mammals, and enjoy this adventure into the world of the bats. The activity consists of a presentation regarding the natural history of bats, classification, diversity, adaptations, reproduction, threats and more. At the end of the presentation, a qualified guide will provide you with a safe opportunity to see the bats that were captured during the night up close. Finally, you will visit the site where one of the nets, used to capture bats, is set up and the guide will explain the methods used for capturing, why the bats don't detect the nets and the process to ensure the wellbeing of the animals.

[www.tirimbina.org](http://www.tirimbina.org)



**Day 4**

*Breakfast-Lunch-Dinner*

Good morning Sarapiquí! Following breakfast at Pozo Azul, we'll transfer to Arenal and the Northern San Carlos Plains to start our day with a very sweet agriculture tour!

**The Sweetest Rainforest Experience** - In this three-hour activity you will discover the marvels of one of the favorite foods of humankind – chocolate! The tour includes a guided hike across the Tirimbina suspension bridge to a cacao plantation, as well as to a forested section where you will observe species of cacao and how the product originally developed there. Onsite, you will learn about the process by which cacao is processed into chocolate (harvesting, fermentation, drying, milling). There also you may taste different types of chocolate, made from organic chocolate grown by the Association of Amazilla Women of the Caribbean, a group of rural women from Pueblo Nuevo de Guacimo dedicated to the production of organic chocolate.

[www.tirimbina.org](http://www.tirimbina.org)



After our chocolate experience, we'll transfer back to Pozo Azul for lunch, and then on to the Arenal Volcano area! We'll have the late afternoon for rest, relaxation and to enjoy the unbelievable scenery!

**Sample Hotel: Magic Mountain Hotel** - Hotel Magic Mountain is located at the base of the Arenal Volcano and consists of 36 standard-sized rooms, all with a balcony or terrace view of Arenal Volcano. The rooms are tastefully decorated, close to the swimming pool area, and include two queen-sized beds, private baths, air conditioning, ceramic tile floors, telephone, refrigerator, cable television, safety box, coffee



maker, hair dryer and wireless internet service. Resort amenities include a spa, swimming pool, restaurant and sports bar.

[www.hotelmagicmountain.com](http://www.hotelmagicmountain.com)

Tonight, after dinner at the hotel, guests can either enjoy free time at the pool, spa or perhaps an evening quiz night or scavenger hunt.

### **Day 5**

#### ***Breakfast-Lunch-Dinner***

Good morning Arenal! After breakfast at the hotel, today we will delve into a morning of exploring and learning!



***Eco-Centro Danaus*** – Today we'll travel to the Eco-Centro Danaus, where we will learn about the natural history of the flora and fauna of Costa Rica. Guests will see and study a great variety of tropical plants and traditional crops, organically farmed in the gardens. The Eco-Centro is home to various animals and a tree nursery. The nursery project propagates local species, who provide shelter for birds or mammals or whose fruit provides food, as well as useful timber species.

[www.ecocentrodanaus.com/en](http://www.ecocentrodanaus.com/en)

Later, we'll travel to La Casona Rio Fortuna for an afternoon of Culture!

***The Cultour – Experience Costa Rican Hospitality!*** – This fantastic activity includes six experiences designed to introduce guests to the culture of native Costa Ricans (Ticos). Along the way, we will learn about the history of this 100-year old estate and its inhabitants.

First, participants will try their hand at making their own corn tortillas from fresh ingredients. As we gather in the kitchen we will make our own creation then move to the dining room to taste our presentation while being serenaded with local songs.

Next, we'll take a short walk to learn about sugar cane, a strong crop in Costa Rica. After learning about harvesting and processing, we'll have an opportunity to taste and drink this fascinating product!



Next, we'll have a fabulous traditional lunch - a hearty and healthy meal with vegetables, meat, and fruit produced by the farmers located around the casona as part of the project to promote a sustainable development of the surrounding rural area.

Next, we'll visit a local elementary school where local children are waiting to present typical local folk dances. Experience how tourism interacts with education and promotes the interaction between local school children



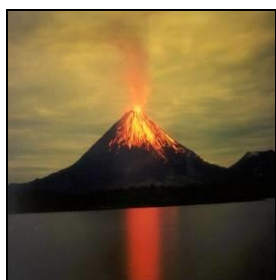
and visitors. **NOTE: Visitors may feel free to bring small gifts for the students if you desire. If so, they are greatly welcomed. Examples include a variety of school supplies and also personal items.**



Next, we'll visit a local tree farm. Guests will break into small groups and plant different types of trees to support Costa Rica's ecology.

Finally, we'll enjoy a delicious treat of many of the tropical fruits Costa Rica is famous for!

During the afternoon, the journey continues to the Arenal Volcano National Park!



***Arenal Volcano Hike*** - An explosive tour on the active side of the volcano! Guides will take our school through Secondary Forrest trails up to the viewpoint just for sunset.... Here, students will gain an understanding about the volcano and the ecosystems created since its last eruption, viewing the fauna and flora along the trails. [www.arenal.net/arenal-volcano-overview.htm](http://www.arenal.net/arenal-volcano-overview.htm)

After our hike, we'll travel to Baldi Hot Springs for dinner and then some serious relaxation!

***Baldi Hot Springs Resort*** – Get ready for a great evening! Baldi Hot Springs provides 25 of the most thermal mineral water pools in the world flowing naturally from the volcano. Their medicinal waters, certified by L.N.A (Laboratorio Nacional de Aguas), have delightful settings for each individual taste of heat with temperatures ranging from 32 – 67o C. These unique pools are surrounded by lush vegetation where delicious waterfalls massage your back. Changing rooms, water slides, swim-up bars and Roman bath pools are sure to whet your appetite. [www.baldihotsprings.cr](http://www.baldihotsprings.cr)



Afterwards, we'll have dinner and enjoy the sights and sounds of Costa Rica!

### ***Day 6***

*Breakfast – Lunch - Dinner*



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Rise and shine Arenal! After a leisurely breakfast in the hotel, we'll board our transportation and travel to the Pacific Central Coast area to the Santa Lucia Town!

**Lunch & The Santa Lucía Town** – Enjoy lunch en route to the Central Pacific Coast and after, spend a short time at Santa Lucia town! The town offers a glimpse of Costa Rica's past and history. Based on a typical Costa Rican town during the times of the Colony and Spanish conquest, Santa Lucía includes a church, a local cantina, a lake, a souvenir shop and other points of interest.

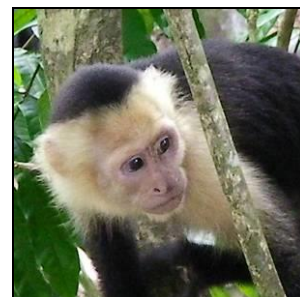
Upon arrival in the Central Pacific Coast we'll check into our hotel. After check-in, we'll be free to settle into our hotel, go beachcombing, swim at the pool, or take a dip in the magnificent Pacific Coast water. Dinner will be served at the hotel restaurant.

### **Day 7**

*Breakfast – Lunch - Dinner*

Good morning Pacific Coast! After breakfast, we'll travel to the beautiful Manuel Antonio State Park for a morning of exploration!

**Manuel Antonio National Park** - With the establishment of Manuel Antonio National Park in 1972, the people of Costa Rica decided to preserve, for future generations, one of the most beautiful and bio-diverse areas in the world. Although it is the country's smallest national park, the stunning beauty and diversity of wildlife in its 683 hectares is unequalled. Manuel Antonio contains a charming combination of rain forest, beaches and coral reefs. These beaches are the most beautiful in the country, lined with lush forest, and the snorkeling is excellent too. The forest is home for sloths, iguanas, monkeys and millions of colorful crabs. [www.manuelantoniopark.com](http://www.manuelantoniopark.com)



After our park visit, we'll stop in a local area where students will be on their own for lunch.

After lunch, we'll embark on a very special adventure!

**Jungle Crocodile Safari & Tropical Mangrove Adventure** - Jungle Crocodile Safari offers a tour specially designed for adventurers and bird watchers that takes place on the Tárcoles River, one of four rivers flowing out into the Nicoya Peninsula, and home to one of the world's largest crocodile populations in the wild with crocs up to fifteen feet long. In addition to the crocodiles, over fifty different kinds of birds can be seen on site, including the very rare scarlet macaw and a great variety of resident and migrant waterfowl. Iguanas and Jesus Cristo lizards are very common as well.



Jungle Crocodile Safari's tour time is two hours. Our bilingual guide offers expert orientation about the crocodiles and other associated wildlife. On the way downstream, the boat heads along the Estero Guacalillo, a most awesome mangrove ecosystem that features four different species of mangrove trees. Guests receive



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a bottle of cold drinking water along with a brochure that shows all 56-bird species commonly sighted along the river. [www.junglecrocodilesafari.com](http://www.junglecrocodilesafari.com)

**Day 8**  
*Breakfast*

It's time to pack up and head home! Following breakfast and dependent upon our flight departures, we'll have the morning free to comb the beach and then we will start to say goodbye to Costa Rica as we head off for our flight home; taking memories with us that will last forever!

**NOTE:** If groups depart Costa Rica in the afternoon, a restaurant stop will be made for lunch purchases by individual group members.



# COSTA RICA STEM ADVENTURE

**Minimum Booking Numbers:**

20 students

**What's Included:**

Round-trip flights with a scheduled carrier  
7-nights' accommodation in Costa Rica  
Breakfasts, lunches & dinners daily (except travel days)  
Transportation for programmed activities & airport transfers  
Poás Volcano Excursion  
The Doka Estate & Coffee Plantation Tour & Master Class  
Hacienda Pozo Azul with 2 adventure activities included  
Bat Master Class  
The Sweetest Rainforest Experience – Chocolate Master Class  
Eco-Centre Danaus Master Class  
The Cultour Master Class  
Guided Hike at Arenal Volcano  
Hot Springs Excursion  
Santa Lucia Historical Town Excursion  
Manuel Antonio National Park Excursion  
Jungle Crocodile Safari Master Class  
Dedicated Visions Tour Ambassador  
24-hour emergency cover

**What's Not Included:**

Departure airport taxes of approximately \$31.00 USD per person; paid directly at the International Airport prior to departure  
Fully Comprehensive Insurance (mandatory)  
Coach transfers to/from home airport  
Meals not specified  
Cost of inoculations or medication required for travel  
Additional Sightseeing / Entertainment Options  
Any gratuities – Coach Driver, Housekeepers, Visions Ambassador, National Guide

**Currency Notes:**

If you plan to travel to Costa Rica, you will most likely want to carry the local Costa Rica currency to purchase goods and services. The Costa Rica currency is called the colón. The colón is named after the Spanish explorer Christopher Columbus (Colón is Spanish for Columbus). The colón is primarily carried in bill form as 50, 100, 500, 1,000, 2,000, 5,000 (referred to as toucans), and 10,000 denominations. In coin form, the colón is carried as 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 100 denominations.

[www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=USD&To=CRC](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=USD&To=CRC)

Most businesses / vendors in Costa Rica will accept USD (United States Dollar) for payment. Many items in local stores and hotels are priced in USD and not in colones. **Please make sure to enquire about currency markings prior to purchase.**

**As always, our staff are always available to you to answer any questions you may have regarding programming. If we may serve you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.**

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## SAMPLE PACKING LIST – COSTA RICA!

- Raincoat / Umbrella
- 1 Long-sleeved Shirt
- Mosquito Repellent & Anti-Itch Cream
- Sunscreen / Sun Cream
- Flashlight / Head Lamp
- Hiking Boots, Athletic Shoes; Water Shoes; Beach Sandals
- Camera & Binoculars if desired
- Bathing Suit / Costume
- Water Bottle
- 4 – 6 pairs of Shorts
- Short-sleeve or non-sleeved T-shirts
- 1 Fleece or Sweatshirt
- Females may desire to bring dresses for dinner although not required
- Cash for Departure Tax (payable to Costa Rican officials prior to departing the country)
- Cash for Lunches on Days 1 & 8
- Cash for any Gratuities / Tips

**PASSPORT COPY - Please bring at least one copy of your passport's information page. In case of the loss of a passport, the passport owner can use this copy to get a new passport reissued relatively quickly. Additionally, participants may be asked to show proof of nationality to authorities, so this should be carried on your person always.**

Please know that gratuities (tips) are totally discretionary however they are customary and assist in making up the general basic wages for service personnel. Gratuities are usually paid per person and suggested minimums are \$1 per day of service, per person on tour, for each of the following positions - bus driver, Costa Rica National Guide, & Tour Ambassador. Housekeepers are generally given a gratuity of approximately \$1 per person, per day. Gratuities are generally paid in local currency or USD.

\*\* Gifts for local school children (The Cultour) if desired

\*\* Staff: Credit card for emergency medical needs (Note: Typical medical facilities will require payment at the time service is rendered and then the group should request reimbursement upon return)



## PACKING TIPS

**Don't pack too much!** An old traveler's trick is to lay out everything you think you need for the trip, then pack half and return the rest to your closet.

**Organize with zip-lock plastic food bags.** Zip-lock food bags can be used to pack certain clothing items you want to protect, to organize smaller items or to keep wet bathing suits separate from other clothes.

**Pack sample sizes of toiletry articles.** Liquids travel best in plastic containers. Squeeze the air out of the bottles before you fill them up and don't fill them to the top. Place the containers in plastic bags.

**Be sure your baggage is clearly labelled.** Remove old airline tags. Make sure your name and address are in a prominent place on the outside and inside of each luggage piece.

**Make a list of the contents of your suitcase as you pack.** Bring this list with you in case your luggage is lost and you need to make a claim.

**Carry fragile, valuable, perishable and basic personal items with you.** Money, jewelry and prescription drugs should be carried with you. Make sure you have at least a toothbrush and other essential toiletries in your carry-on bag.

**Articles that cannot be transported as checked baggage.** The following items should not be packed in checked baggage. If a loss of these items should occur, the airlines will not be held liable and will only compensate lost baggage according to their lost baggage policies.

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| * Passport & Important Documents | * Fragile & Perishable Articles |
| * Currency                       | * Jewelry                       |

### Other things to remember:

- Refill your prescriptions before the departure
- Bring some OTC medicines such as pain reliever, allergy tablets and Imodium to deal with illness

